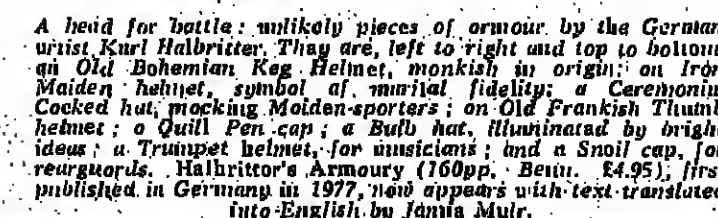


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‘The Discovery of Scotland’



TLS Commentary

The bonny side of Scotland

By Nicholas Phillipson

The National Gallery of Scotland has opened its new exhibition hall with an exhibition of outstanding interest which reaches into some important corners of Scottish cultural history as well as developing an important theme in the history of British art. "The Discovery of Scotland" shows how English and Scottish artists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries viewed the scenery of the country during a period of intensive social, economic and cultural change while it was becoming one of the main sources of romantic inspiration in Western society at large. At one level it is an exhibition about changing ideas of landscape. At another, it touches on one of the most complex and interesting themes in Scottish cultural history: how Scottish artists held in balance their sense that their country was both rude and refined, a civilized country which had managed to turn its back on the very signs of primitivism which foreigners found so appealing.

This is a large exhibition and, interestingly, there are not many pictures which are good enough to stand on their own. It is James Holloway and Lindsay Jerrard's "The Discovery of Scotland" which brings the exhibition to life. They have constructed a framework for analysing changing attitudes to Scottish landscape that is practical and sophisticated and likely to dominate discussion of the subject for a long time to come. Their choice of pictures is discriminating and instructive. Their scholarly and suggestive commentary is an original and important contribution to Scottish cultural history which deserves to be widely read. And it will be enjoyed all the more because its authors, unlike so many Scottish historians, have not been pursued by patriotic furies. Their story goes like this.

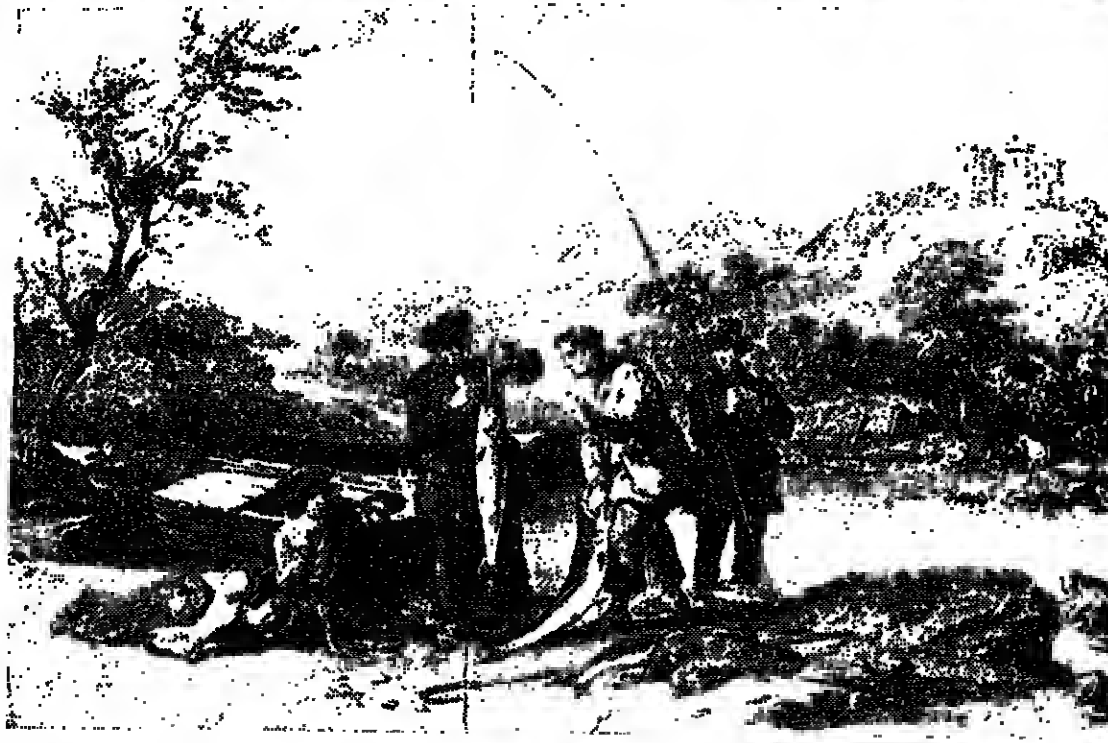
The discovery of Scottish scenery began in the second half of the eighteenth century. Hitherto, when painters had represented Scottish scenery, they had simply made accurate drawings of towns, houses and estates and had ignored the natural landscape of hills and rivers so beloved of later painters. Now, against the background of a growing interest in landscape gardening, topography, antiquities, legend and, interestingly, theatre, a small group of English and Scottish artists, such as Paul Sandby, Alexander Runciman, Robert Adam, Jacob Mora, and John Clerk began to explore Scotland's scenery in a number of different ways. By the turn of the century the idea of Scottish landscape had become a series of specific picturesque images like the spectacular waterfalls on the Clyde, the Esk valley, Roslin Chapel and the supposed locations of the arduous journey of Allan Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd* and Ossian's

poems. At the same time, Turner and the prolific Nasmyth family had developed a panoramic view of the picturesque Scottish landscape on which English and Scottish taste was in feed for the next generation.

Walter Scott transformed the perception of Scottish landscape. His descriptions of Border and Highland scenery, particularly as they were interpreted by Turner in his influential illustrations to Scott's *Poetical Works*, his inexhaustible capacity for investing otherwise commonplace natural scenery with legendary and historical associations, captured the imagination of Scottish and English painters, widening public interest in Scottish scenery and drawing it westwards to the desolate and hitherto forbidding Highlands. *The Lady of the Lake*, set on Ellen's enclosure in Loch Katrine, presented an image of the Highlands as a resort for those in search of repose and an escape from the turmoil of ordinary life. This world, made accessible by the railways and lugged with romantic associations by Scott, generated a new class of tourists led by the Queen herself. Indeed, one of the glories of the exhibition is a memorable record by Carl Hoag of one of the Queen's large and aristocratic Highland expeditions, a party of aristocrats in water, fording the Poll Tuff with impressive solemnity. This world, which is brilliantly discussed by Dr Errington, was that which Landseer and the remarkable *Henrietta McCulloch* ("the Scottish Constable") made their own in a series of vast canvases. It was they who presented Scotland as a Land of Mountains and Flood, a land which was fit for tourists and expatriates.

This conical image of romantic Scotland, developed, it seems, in the studios of Edinburgh painters, was also associated with Scott. It was Runciman who showed that Scott's descriptions of landscape rested as much on meticulous descriptions of foregrounds as on their invocation of distant and heroic backgrounds. Flax, Millais, then William Dyce and other more sentimentally-minded Scottish Pre-Raphaelites began to use Scottish scenery unheroically, without precise topographical points of reference as foregrounds for portraits of legends, or as a backdrop for the best thing in the exhibition, and Dyce's "Man of Sorrows" are the most interesting examples of this genre.

But it was left to Glasgow painters to produce the most complete reaction to existing conceptions of Scottish scenery. Turning away from Scott and Scotland to Leasing and France, they turned, as it were, from landscape to the land, from the world of the tourist and gentleman to that of ordinary peasant



"Solomon Fishers on the Tweed" after Louis Haghe (1806-1885): this hand-coloured lithographic proof (not reproduced here) is included in the exhibition discussed on this page.

life and ordinary, unheroic scenery. It was a world which might be recognizable to Scotsmen but was of little interest to the world at large. By the turn of the century, Dr Errington argues, Scottish landscape no longer attracted the foreign painter; for better or for worse it was left to Scottish painters to fashion a world of passages and images which would only command the attention of the foreigner as pure painting, not as representations of a mythic world that had become part of Western culture itself.

In many ways, the first section of the exhibition, organized by James Holloway, is the most interesting. He is able to show that although the discovery of Scotland was first undertaken by a handful of painters, they were men of considerable enterprise and ability. Some, like Jacob Mora, presented Scottish landscape in the grand manner, something which was sublime in itself and capable of attracting the sort of discerning and thoughtful tourists who stood in the foreground of his painting of Cor Linn. More often, however, these painters set out to present Scotland as a civil society set in a picturesque landscape, populated by ordinary people who were engaged in the ordinary business of life and lived in a countryside which was being improved by modernized landowners. Sometimes they thought of Scotland in more complex terms as a country whose otherwise barren and unremarkable landscape was made interesting by legends, or associations with the *Gentle Shepherd* or Ossian or with a gothic past which was embodied in castles and ruins with specific historical associations.

It is clear that by the turn of the century a canonical view of Scottish landscape had emerged in the engravings of Paul Sandby and later in the work of the Nasmyths. Mr Holloway devotes a great deal of attention to Sandby, whose brilliant sketches of scenes from Scottish life were made while he was working in the army as a surveyor after the Battle of Waterloo. There can be no doubt that until Turner's day Sandby's engravings (and, one might add, Thomas Rowlandson's scurrilous and superb prints on Bowall and Johnson's Highland Jaunt *The Pleasure Boat*) were the most important stock of visual images of Scotland accessible to Englishmen. But it is also clear that Scotland had come within an ace of producing a distinctive image of landscape that could be conceived in purely visual and painterly terms without reference to literary, historical or legendary points of reference.

Alexander Runciman and Robert Adam come over as key figures in this context, and it is rather a pity that they have not been considered systematically and in greater length. At different times in their careers both men spoke of themselves as

landscape painters but each allowed himself to be diverted to other paths. Neither had disciples and no one else seemed able or willing to attempt the difficult task of representing Scottish landscape from the bondages in which literary, historical and social ideas were placing it. Perhaps things would have been different without Scott and Turner. Scott's extraordinary ability to make landscape resonant with history and Turner's remarkable skill in developing visual interpretations of Scott's world created a situation in which it was increasingly difficult for Scotsmen or Englishmen to avoid seeing Scotland through their eyes. Inventive English visitors like Worthington might show skill and sophistication in exploiting the literary and visual information on which the painter's conception of Scotland depended. But Scottish painters, constrained by the conservative tastes of their patrons, looking for intellectual or visual sophistication, like Runciman and Adam, found themselves trapped into subordinating the visual demands of natural landscape to the ideological need to present Scotland as a world of history and romance which was gratifying to Scotsmen and was a source of admiration to the world at large.

It is this insistence that Scotland was a civilized country with an ancient history that seems to be the hallmark of Scottish exercises in landscape painting. And the picturesque landscape with its stress on the remarkable at the expense of the ordinary, its love of castles and ruins, its curlicue associations and its theatrically seemed to provide an ideal vehicle for that image. However, as Dr Errington points out, the paradox was that the picturesque landscape was the Nasmyth and their followers made Scotland look so much like any other country that they began to worry patriotically-minded critics. Nothing could have been more distinctly Scottish than the desolate Highland landscape which an earlier generation had found so offensive and threatening. It encouraged Turner and Landseer to construct a romantic image of a Highland landscape which was awesome and hostile precisely because it was so desolate as to suppress the possibility of human civilization. McCulloch, purely the most influential Scottish landscape artist of all time, attempted to paint exactly the same scenes but succeeded only in depicting them. There is nothing hostile or threatening about his landscapes, no sign that they depict a countryside warring for human habitation. His Highland scenes, bathed in golden light, often framed by picturesque foregrounds and populated by the sleek stage waiting to be stalked, attract the tourist in search of ease and refreshment. As Dr Errington puts it:

"There is something theatrical and illusory about the experience of Scottish scenery as it was received available by modern travel. Every effort was made to provide the visitor with a rapid succession of scenic alterations which no before his eyes while he sat in stony comfort in the heat of his coach or railway carriage, regarding an unrolling series of vistas that did not include, as scenic addition, his own everyday self."

McCulloch's eyes, it is the desolation of the Highlands that makes them fit for civilized art and ensures that Scotland will be seen as a country which has a distinctive and honourable part to play in a modern world.

Ruskin and Millais are presented as men who revitalized the contemporary image of Scottish landscape. What is interesting, however, is the speed with which British tourists, the intellectual or visual sophistication of the interest of the world of Pre-Raphaelite glory lies in its slightly eerie depiction of late antique relationships. But while painters such as John Ruskin, Noel Paton, Bell Scott and Douglas were capable of considerable technical virtuosity, they offered, in the place of allegory, sentimental and vivid depictions of classic scenes from Scottish history capable only of arousing the interest of a Scottish public. It is impossible not to sympathize with the result of the Glasgow school in two things: the way in which they broke on the iconographical world of an Edinburgh-based conception of Scottish landscape and revere to the familiar world of ordinary peasant life and everyday landscape.

For the Glasgow painters set out to restore to Scottish landscape the painterly qualities it had lost since Alexander Runciman's day. Their work, at least in its professional and depressing quality, perhaps a larger or a different selection of work by Mulhens, Fraser, D. Y. Cameron or John C. Fyfe, or a more systematic treatment of Scottish industrial landscape, would have shown that some Glasgow painters were capable of the sort of spontaneity, technical inventiveness and visual penetration that is characteristic of Alexander Runciman, but he sadly lacking in these fine sixteenth paintings.

As it is, the exhibition ends on a note of apocalyptic gloom. The story of a country whose scenery was capable of generating great literature but not great art. And it shows that while the Scottish landscape community had managed to produce great philosophers, poets and men of letters, it had not managed to produce a single great landscape painter.

The exhibition closes on November 30.

Observations of the ordinary

By Samuel Hynes

GEORGEY GRIGSON:

The Fiesta
Slipp. Secker and Warburg. £3.50.

A poem in Geoffrey Grigson's previous book of verse begins, "Even if ten of my poems should be read in ten hundred years' time, I'd never, kind readers thank you, my self, be around. . . . No doubt; most of us would rather be alive than immortal. But if not life, then Grigson will look for survival in his poems, rather than in any of the other kinds of books—so many that I doubt if even he knows how many—that have poured from his brilliant, prolific, contrived mind. This is the essential point to be made about him, I think: that he is a poet who has for various reasons written other kinds of books, and not a man of letters who also writes verses. About other things—art, nature, topography, the poems of other men—he has considerable knowledge, and some pungent opinions; but his attachment to the writing of poems is clearly his vocation."

It is neverless better known for his opinions than for his verse he has only himself to blame: if you write quiet poems and noisy prose, it's the prose that will be heard. In his early, *New Verse* days, Grigson mused his achievement as an editor by abusing writers whose only offence was to please him: *New Verse* was an extraordinarily good journal, and the editing of it was a heroic act in the 1930s, but what one remembers most clearly about it now is likely to be not the high quality of its verse, but the violence of its attacks on poor Edith Sitwell and Cecil Day Lewis and Michael Roberts. Forty years later, neither age nor the quality of his wife's poetry has mellowed Grigson's much, except that it is still as good as new, with beaver down and lace on the ready, against the weakness, the wrong-headedness, the vulgarity, the un-Grigsonian of the rest of the world. "The trouble with Grigson," William Empson is quoted as saying, "is that he never attacks on principle; he attacks because he says, 'Just so. And with what result?' Very little, I would judge: it is just old Grigson charging again."

Fortunately reviews, like the rest of literary criticism, have a short expectancy. So have flower books, guide books, and anthologies. If poverty, that shadowy reader, returns to Grigson, it will probably not be for his prose. The poetry, as a better chance, though it would be difficult to guess which poems will survive. For Grigson belongs to the class of limited poets, the kind who write poems all the time, as other people write journals or diaries or letters, as a means of self-definition and self-sustenance, a way of arresting the daily losses that time exacts. Grigson, it seems to me, is not a poet in the sense of John Donne and Robert Frost: it is a kind of tradition. In this sort of poetry there are not likely to be individual masterpieces above the level of the work like mountains on a plain; there is no single poem of Hardy's that one would rank with the *Ode to a Nightingale* or the "Immortality Ode," and yet Hardy belongs with Keats and Wordsworth among the great English poets. Quotidian poetry, one might call this tradition: the poetry of the small, the homely, the contingent, the low-voiced, the ordinary. Grigson called his first book *Some Observations*, and that title, with its double meaning, poems that look, and poems that comment on the looking—would do for the entire tradition.

Of the particular qualities of Grigson's observations some of the titles of his prose writings will give a sense: *Wild Flowers of Britain*; *English Drawings from Samuel Cooper to Gwen John*; *The English Year*; *The Faber Book of Epigrams* and *Epigrams*. From these we can extract the following elements: an interest in nature, an interest in art, an attention to the dullness of experience (*The English Year* is a catalogue of nature writings from English diaries and journals), an appreciation of the short, packed, witty forms of verse, and a deepened Englishness. These elements combine in various ways to make poems which, taken together, compose a "Fifty years' record of an observing life." It is, in private

recital, a self alone in the world: there is rarely another person present, not many poems are direct address, almost none are third-person narratives. The observations are exact but reticent, visual but not descriptive, and though they are full of natural details, they are painterly rather than nature poems. Because they are observations in the other sense as well, they also record public history over the past half-century—the 1930s and the Second World War, Hiroshima, the deaths of Pavlovsk and Kennedy and Martin Luther King, the Vietnam war—public history seen from within the private life.

One may into that private world is through a poem titled "A Painter of Our Day" (it is in the collection of 1969, *The Angelical of Ice Cream*). The painter is Ben Nicholson, his subject is larger: the poem is about the place, and the necessity, of art in our lives. It begins:

He teaches me what is; never
Yet never contempt for what has
been composed.

And a bit further on:

I am taught again to accept
What is; also, that always each
He makes and the immense realm
each other penetrate.

What is: the work of art, poem or painting, must be concerned with that, with reality. But not with realism: Art and Life, the two wonderful realms, remain distinct, or must be interpreted. Art is a made thing, something life, the actual organized (as he says in the Nicholson poem, "the organized above all accidents survives").

It may seem a bit plodding in such terms: who would deny it? But Grigson's distinction is to see or poem as a physical object, like a painting or a piece of sculpture (in an interview he talks about "real round poems, or real square ones, or real oblong ones, three dimensional"). It is appropriate that his statement of his aesthetic principles should be contained in a poem celebrating an abstract painter; for his poems do seem often to be like the paintings that he first glance they resemble.

On a still:
Black and white stripes,
A pink scarf, amethyst edge of a
Flannel, buller shoes, red, . . .

I notice only
Extravagant wonder
Of items laid out on a long
White painted sill.

The epigraph of this little poem is a quotation from one of Grigson's masters, Wyndham Lewis: "Moments of vision are blurred rapidly, and the past sinks into the rhetoric of the will." Grigson seems determined to elude that rhetoric, and to make poems that are moments of vision in a phrase that comes, of course, from his other master, Thomas Hardy. Not visionary moments, though, or only in his own special sense of the term; for Grigson

son's meaning means simply having good eyes, as his 1911 anthology, *Visions Poems and Passages in the Poet's Eye* demonstrates. His poems, however, less fraught with vision, are exact but reticent, visual but not descriptive, and though they are full of natural details, they are painterly rather than nature poems.

"Objects" is a moment of vision, but it is also a painterly composition (note the careful attention to colour). And it makes an observation: that one sees the ordinary world, if one really sees it, with an extravagant wonder. There is delight in the seeing, but there is also a kind of sadness: moments pass, wonder ends in melancholy; who, seeing the world thus, would ever want to leave it? Grigson's poems, even those that are most strictly confined to exact observation, are full of time: he sees snow on a hill, a starved white horse, an evening scene at a desolate airfield, a decayed house in County Clare, and what he sees are images of time passing and past. Like Hardy, he has in defence against time, and pretends to deny the passage of time, but the poems are an element of melancholy and nostalgia that is present from the beginning (as for example in early poems like "1910" and "The Well in the Valley"), but has become more pronounced in his later work.

This is not to say the Grigson in his poems is simply a passive observer, a spectator in time. His love and delight in the particulars of the physical world is energetic, and so is his hatred of a good deal of modern life and art. Grigson has always been a good, though somewhat indiscriminate, lover, and life has obliged him with many opportunities to exercise his gift. Surprisingly, his skill as a poet and his quick eye for what is beautiful have not combined to make him a very expressive writer. Perhaps his interest in technique distracts him from his target, or perhaps it's the cause, I find his attacks on his fellow poets, on critics and dons and the most mellow, tedious and unwieldy of his talent, and I wish they weren't there among the good poems to remind one of the abusive side of his nature. Still, if the poems are the record of a life, the stanzas are a true part of the record.

By now, the whole man speaks in his own voice in the poems, but it was not always so. Like the painter he so admires, Ben Nicholson, Grigson came to his true style late. The poems that he wrote during the 1930s have no distinct style of their own, some of them read as though they might have been put together out of left-over contributions to *New Verse*—bits of skewed syntax, surreal images, a heap of definite articles, and a dash of doom, such as characterized the work of the Sons of Wynton. Grigson's own assessment of this work is not high: "Most of the earlier poems," he wrote in the preface to his *Collected Poems* (1963), "were written when I was a young man, in the wake of the major talents, for avoidance of conventional harmonies, line units, and shapes. The risk, though, was to offer too much 'the' to much of a kind of amnesia. In my, a weakness of that kind." But in time—

during the 1940s—he found his tradition, the tradition of Clare and Hardy and Edward Thomas. His poems became less fraught with vision, more themselves: formal, tight, obedient, painterly, composed. This has remained the Grigson style ever since, and though it has its limitations, he is apparently content to live within them.

The Fiesta is Grigson's eleventh book of verse; there must be about 700 poems in the whole lot. This new book resembles the other recent ones in its tones and techniques, but it has its own qualities. Grigson is now well over seventy, and one should not be surprised that his mind runs much more slowly than the old man's subject. There is a poem titled "Young Death," and another beginning "I dreamt you were dead," and another with these lines:

You are dead. So again and again
I return to contemplating this
abominable

Brevity of living.
These are gloomy poems ("Old men," as he says, "are glum"), but they are not self-pitying or sentimental; death is outrageous, not nihilistic. Among the poems of death there are plenty of others in which ordinary observations of what is are turned into ceremonies of celebration. A good and typical example is "Halving of a Pear":

An item of heat being is
Halving this pear and in its
ivory section this black
Star of seeds.

Also pointing this black
Star in ivory out to you
And you agreeing in
An item of best being.
An observation, yes, but the poem makes it also a love poem, reticent, but intimate and tender. The style is what it has been for thirty years or more—formal, painterly, economical. The diction is plain (though in other poems the plainness is decorated with cognates of Greek and Latin, or with an odd term or a proper noun thrust in among the ordinary words), and the structure is spatial—a moment of vision held out of time in a frame of words. A modest poem, certainly, yet it has that sense of something more being said than is in the end the surest sign that a poem is the real thing.

Grigson's preoccupations from earlier volumes appear anew here: poems on the follies of critics and the ugliness of the modern world, images of death, recurrent, never. But one element that strikes me as new is the subject of the title poem, a sceptical but questioning meditation on religion, in which he asks:

But then making
A god out of the half-emptiness of gods,
Recognizing necessity, and rejecting
As if, tell me, my being, now,
What shall I do? Or what shall
maintain

My being?
Like his contemporaries MacNelly and Day Lewis, Grigson is a clergyman's son, and the religious in which he reluctantly disbelieves is a part of his consciousness. That it should emerge in verse here is no doubt also appropriate to an old man's poems. The new poems are not exactly religious, but several edge count the subject of belief (another example is "Conversation with a Clerical Father").

In the list of the author's works that appears at the front of *The Fiesta*, a number of Grigson's prose books are grouped under the title "Celebration and Criticism." Grigson has done a good deal of both in his day, both in verse and in prose, but it is the criticism that has made his reputation, and established his public image as a critical writer. In the wake of the major talents, for avoidance of conventional harmonies, line units, and shapes. The risk, though, was to offer too much 'the' to much of a kind of amnesia. In my, a weakness of that kind." But in time—

The Beauty of Petitions

The Wolf
trotted to the lion's den.
"Lion, I've brought you an ass."
The lion
paddled from his cave.
"What does he want, Mr Wolf?"
"He wants your permission."
"Permission to do what, Mr Wolf?"
"By your leave, Lion,
he asks me to kill him."

The lion gave due concern
to this weighty matter.
"A difficult decision!" sighed the lion.
Bending neither to one side
nor the other,
he pronounced it only just
to grant the request.

Roger Howard

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The Art of The Gwynedd-Poet
233pp. Athlone Press, £8.95.

This is a very different book from Edward Wilson's recent study, *The Gwynedd-Poet* (1976). Wilson gave separate consideration to each of the four poems in the manuscript, without committing himself to the hypothesis of single authorship. W. A. Davenport, in contrast, rests the whole weight of his study on the assumption that one man wrote all four poems, probably in the order in which they stand in the manuscript: *Pearl*, *Purity*, *Patience* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Like all good conjectures, this one is open to refutation; but this is how knowledge progresses. If Mr Davenport's assumption is ever shown to be wrong, then much of his argument collapses; but this is a perfectly honourable position to be in. In the meantime, he appears to have made real additions to knowledge. This is an intelligent, perceptive and independent-minded book.

Mr Davenport sets out to give a literary account of the poems, with a minimum of historical scholarship. The method is close examination of the poems. Perhaps this is not quite as novel as he suggests; but he has a sharp eye and makes many new observations. The first chapter, on *Pearl*, does not show him at his best, however. He implies that literary readers must always be looking for emotional drama, poignancy, and even "resonant poetics". The rest he tends to dismiss as doctrine and didacticism. But an antithesis such as that between emotion and doctrine just does not work. The poem like *Pearl*, any more than its companion *Patience*, One does not have to believe that *Pearl* is an elegy for the poet's daughter (though it helps) in such that doctrine, in this poem, is itself passionate. What is one to believe about the heavenly rewards of bap-

tized infants? The poem suffers, according to Mr Davenport, from its effort to answer this question; but that judgment seems to me to rest on a narrow and restrictive idea of what poetry is and what it can do. The dry stanzas of *Pearl* are not generally inferior in the sweet ones; and the argument of the poem, even if we accept the current view that texts in verse can only pretend to argue, is an essential part of its strength.

It seems to me, therefore, that Mr Davenport rather underestimates *Pearl* (the earliest of the poems, in his opinion). His discussions of *Purity* and *Patience*, however, are quite excellent. He describes the former, rightly, I think, as an unsuccessful poem which contains some of the most powerful poetry composed by a Middle English poet. He gives a finely discriminating account of the way the poet adjusts his mode of narrative to the varying qualities of the Old Testament stories; an epic manner for Noah's flood, "unreluctant intimacy" for Sodom and Gomorrah, romantic extravagance for Belshazzar's Feast. Equally good is Mr Davenport's discussion of the poet's treatment of the story of Joseph in *Patience*—a poem which he regards, with justice, as something more complex and interesting than a mere exemplum of the virtue of patience.

The interpretation of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is by now a well-developed art, to which Mr Davenport makes a spirited contribution. He offers an excellent account of the complex figure of Gawain's adversary, Sir Bertilak de Hautdesert (a name in which he is the first to see a message for the hero: "Bear thy luck of high doing serving"). On Gawain he is less convincing. Modern readers seem more of home with complex and intriguing secondary characters, like Bertilak in *Sir Gawain* or Pandarus in Chaucer's *Troilus*, than with the simpler primary characters such as Troilus or Gawain. Mr Davenport's account of *Sir Gawain*, in my opinion, diminishes and even trivializes the hero, by overstressing the delicate comeliness which is undoubtedly there in the poet's portrait. He speaks of Gawain as "something of a heroic frail".

"young, over-zealous, inexperienced", and even as "a reluctant Ringer for the Lodger".

No doubt the last phrase has strayed in from an undergraduate tendency to be, as it were, over-zealous, with a hero who is, after all, a great knight of the Round Table. Mr Davenport has little time for the ideal of perfection which Gawain bears emblazoned on his shield; and he regards Gawain's mortification at failing to achieve it as an "exaggerated stance of tragic failure". Thus he arrives at a reading of the poem's last scene which, I think, coarsens its tone. There is comedy, but there is also simple moral gravity. In general, however, it must be said that Mr Davenport is admirably responsive to the poem's nuances, as in his comment on the speeches of the Lady. "The poet's command of tones of speech is subtly displayed in the nebulous euphuism of her syntax, in her mock-serious turning of the courtly metaphor of imprisonment into jesting literal fact, in her arch flattery and her comically indignant reproaches." "Nehelons amplane" is marvellously apt.

For many readers the most interesting chapter will be the last: "The Poet and his Art". Mr Davenport here presents a genuinely synoptic view of the four poems, considered as the work of one man. He makes a number of illuminating comparisons—tracing the theme of "resentful protest" through *Pearl*, *Patience*, and *Sir Gawain*, for instance—and he also attempts a general characterization. Here he stresses the poet's interest in "difficult cases", his dramatic power, and his intense awareness of "varied ways of seeing". He sees him as a poet of tension, conflict and irony, who was not very interested in conventional moral teaching or orthodox casuistry. This is a *Gwynedd*-poet governed by "not impulse to complicate and diversify, to qualify judgments, to involve issues, to modify mental lessons through experience". I think, reluctantly, that the poet was rather straighter than that; in this chapter, like the rest of the book, is worthy of its subject: bold, well-written and intelligent.

Consider, for example, pages 70 to 71, on *Georgics* IV: "So, in light and fragrance, the scapes of the bees' activity glow and sparkle before our eyes, wild, as nectar becomes honey, an labor itself seems to be distilled into a higher form of play. Surely... the bees do not provide an accurate model for the human condition in its consciousness of effort and its variety, but the very distinctiveness and even inconsequence of the 'vehicle' here seems to expand and loosen and virtually become the author's 'tenor' in a way not possible in the earlier and, as it were, weightier books. The cultural experience of reading the *Georgics* is not the chore of studying on agricultural manual precisely because, in reading it, our deepest cultivation is becoming like to its goal, seeking in the activity of gathering honey and wax the contemplation of what Swift and Arnold called these two best things: sweetness and light."

The imagery of this luxurious passage seems to bear no serious relation to Virgil: the places in the poem mentioned just before do not show that the bees are really, as he thought, relevant to the *Georgics*; more are bees. The poem simply obscures that insight by a technique Michael O'Loughlin sometimes uses in a casual and irresponsible way, identifying the reader's experience of a work with the poet's. So also page 69: "The image of the purple hide seems the mind that reads it as it does the body it encloses" (and of pages 29 and 106).

Or, again, pages 278-79: "What needs special emphasis, however, is that the ossified condition is very much the condition of being an essayist... The 'critical' and, I suspect, ill-proportioned quality of Montaigne's humanism, its self-reflective character, for him to complete this world or himself is first and essentially to del."

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Closing date 22 November, 1978.

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Applications are invited from Chartered Librarians for the above post. The functions of the present School Librarian at Westfield Comprehensive School (1,900 pupils) will be expanded in the near future to provide a community library service to the general public in the Mosborough area of the city. The post provides an excellent opportunity for a young, enthusiastic librarian to organize a comprehensive range of library services for a large comprehensive school and to develop and organize a new service to the public, the success of which will very much depend on the enthusiasm and commitment the successful applicant brings to the post.

Application forms and further information from the Director of Libraries, Central Library, Surrey Street, Sheffield S1 1XZ, tel. 734709. Closing date, 24th November.



WEST GLAMORGAN

County Council

EDUCATION DEPT.

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

REF: SVF/037/560

School Library Service, Library Resources Centre, Cockfield

Applicants should be Chartered Librarians, but consideration will be given to applicants who are qualified but not yet chartered.

Salary: £3,420 to £3,834 plus £312 supplement per annum. Application forms, returnable by November 24, 1978, are available from The County Clerk, Central Personnel Unit, West Glamorgan County Council, The Guildhall, Swansea. Telephone: Swansea 50821, extension 2923.

PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBER

Institute of Personnel Management

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LIBRARY ASSISTANT

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The successful candidate will be of 'O' level standard and will be someone who enjoys working with a minimum of supervision. A person with an ability to work under pressure and to meet deadlines. Previous library experience would be an advantage.

Starting salary: from £2,775-£3,200, plus 1.1% (50p per day). Holidays: 4 weeks per annum. Hours: 9.30 Mon-Fri. Write or telephone for application form to: The Office Manager, Institute of Personnel Management, Central House, Upper Woburn Place, London: WC1H 0EX. Tel. 01-267 3244, Ext. 109.

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DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARIES & MUSEUMS

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Further details and application forms are available from the Director of Libraries & Museums, Public Library, Hopa Stroud, Falkirk FK7 5AU. Telephone: Falkirk 24911, ext. 201. Closing date: Friday, 24th November, 1978.

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

A qualified Librarian (Library Studies) is required for the Chief Librarian post in the City of Lincoln. The successful applicant will be responsible for the coordination of Library Services in Lincoln, a large Council housing estate in the Western Area of the City. The Assistant Librarian will be expected to gain a good knowledge of the neighbourhood and form contacts with the local community. Salary will be within the Librarians Scale £3,238-£4,146 plus inclusive minimum of £3,752 p.a. for Chartered Librarians. Generous assistance will be given with the expenses incurred in moving house in accordance with the Authority's Scheme. Further details are available from the Staffing Section, Lincoln City Council, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805,

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Prospective candidates are invited to write to the Deputy Librarian for further information.

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Further particulars and application forms are available from Allan Leach, Director of Library Services, Camogie Library, 12 Main Street, Kyle, Co. Antrim, to whom applications should be sent. Closing date for applications Friday, December 1st, 1978.

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Ref: ACA/198

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Further details and application forms, which should be returned by 30th November 1978, from the Establishment Office, The Polytechnic, Queensgate, Huddersfield HD1 3DT. Telephone 0484 22288, ext. 2225.

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Application forms and further information obtainable from the Personnel Office, Town Hall, Bolton BL1 1RU, to be returned by 18th November, 1978.

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LIBRARIAN

BUGHEY

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Further details from: Alan White, Training/Personnel Officer, Belfast City Council, 100 Victoria Road, Belfast BT6 3AA. Telephone: 261 111. Applications should be sent to the Personnel Office, 100 Victoria Road, Belfast BT6 3AA, by 10th November 1978.

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LIBRARIANS

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AND LILLESDEAN SCHOOL

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